

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Falls festival-goers sought for study

Festival-goers are being sought as part of a study into how such activities shape the way we socialise.

Clayton Hawkins, of UTAS Cradle Coast campus, wants people who went to the 2010/2011 Falls Music and Arts Festival in Marion Bay to share their experiences of the event via a survey.

Mr Hawkins, from the Institute for Regional Development (IRD) based on the campus, is undertaking a PhD study looking at the role informal leisure spaces, such as festivals, playgrounds, parklands and skate parks, play in social networks and participation.

The Festival is one of Tasmania's biggest cultural events, attracting thousands of music and art lovers from across Tasmania and beyond every year.

Mr Hawkins said while the economic benefits of events such as Falls were studied and known, little had focussed on the value of the social aspects.

"Informal social networks actually provide an outlet to socialise, connect and participate in a community," he said.

In particular, the survey research is focussing on the Festival's 'tent city', where attendees would congregate to camp and socialise in an informal environment.

"Face-to-face, tent site interviews were conducted at this year's Festival where attendees were invited to chat with an interviewer about their 'on-the-ground' experiences," Mr Hawkins said.

"It is hoped that the research will uncover insights into the current and potential role of informal leisure spaces such as the Falls Music and Arts Festival."

Survey participants can also elect to go into the draw to win entry passes to the 2011 Falls Music and Arts Festival.

Mr Hawkins' PhD research study, *Weak Ties in Leisure*, looks at the social interaction within informal spaces. It is hoped the findings will influence future policy direction for leisure planning in communities.

The 10 minute, online survey can be found at www.leisurespaces.com.au

Submissions close Friday, March 11 at 5pm. Participants must be over the age of 18 and have attended the 2010/2011 Falls Music and Arts Festival.

For more information regarding the study contact Clayton Hawkins on (03) 6430 4925 or email Clayton.Hawkins@utas.edu.au

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